PORTABLE NET DEVICE

DESCRIPTION

[Para 1]

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to an athletic ball game net. More specifically, the present invention relates to an improved portable net device applying thereto an adjustable net mechanism, thereby expanding usability further to baseball catching, hockey ball catching, and soccer ball catching.

[Para 2]

Conventional athletic ball game nets on the market typically focus on practicing ball games in a limited space. For example, As demand goes on known for are utility realizing an enhanced application a variety of ball catching a variety of ball ca ball catching net which enhances portability and efficiently stops the flight of golf balls.

[Para 3]

For practice purposes, it is desirable to capture the ball before it travels a large distance or strikes objects or people. Existing capturing structures include a net attached to the perimeter of a capturing frame and a rigid support frame attached to the capturing frame. The support frame is attached to the capturing frame and provides a base allowing the capturing structure to be disposed on the ground. A disadvantage of such structure is limited application. Further, it is easily folded and

efficiently stored. This is because both the support frame and the capturing frame must be properly folded and placed in a container. Further use of a capturing frame and a supporting frame makes such structures more expensive to manufacture and harder to carry. There is, therefore, a need for a stable practice net applicable to a variety of balls. There is also a need for such a net to be easy to assemble and easy to carry.

[Para 4]

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is contrived to overcome the conventional disadvantages. Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention employing an adjustable net mechanism. Another object is to expand usability further to baseball catching, hockey ball catching, and soccer ball catching. A further object is to provide a portable net device which facilitates assembly and disassembly by simplifying the construction and enhancing portability.

[Para 5]

To achieve these and other objects, the portable net device according to the present invention comprises a main member forming a first closed loop with the main member defined by bottom and top sections. A base member forming a second closed loop is defined by a front section and a non-front section. The main member bottom section is attached to the base member front section. A fabric member having a front section and a non-front section. The fabric member front section is connected to the main member to flexibly stop the flight of projectiles. A connecting member is

provided to selectively attach the fabric member non-front section to the base member non-front section in a detachable attachment format. Further provided is a supporting member to sustain the main member against the base member while maintaining a substantial angle between the main and base members.

[Para 6]

For a better performance, the main member has a plurality of corners each in arc so as to shape the first closed loop in a substantial polygon, whereas the base member has a plurality of corners each in arc so as to shape the second closed loop in a substantial polygon. In this construction, a fabric retainer is preferably formed adjacent to each of the corners to maintain the polygon in shape.

[Para 7]

The net device further a patch attachedly sided to the main and base members. The patch has a guide to support the supporting member. The guide is preferably a sleeve to allow passage of the supporting member. The main and base members are each coilable to overlapping loops.

[Para 8]

The connecting member is a hook detachably attached to the fabric member non-front section and releasably hooked to the base member non-front section. Selectively, the connecting member is provided such that the hook is detachably attached to the base member non-front section and releasably hooked to the fabric member non-front section.

[Para 9]

A target net portion may be detachably attached across the first closed loop to the main member to have a central basket net therethrough

to allow passage of the flight of the projectiles. The net device may also include a main sleeve substantially covering the main member, and a base sleeve substantially covering the base member. The main sleeve has main holes and the base sleeve has base holes so the main and base holes removably carry therein ends of the supporting member.

[Para 10]

The advantages of the present invention are numerous. First, the portable net device according to the present invention employs an adjustable mechanism for attachment of the fabric member to the base member so as to expand usability to baseball catching, hockey ball catching and soccer ball catching. Second, a pair of coilable main and base members are foldably connected to each other and coilably overlapped in multiple loops, respectively, thereby further facilitating storage, assembly and disassembly of the net device. Third, the patch sleeve receiving therethrough the supporting member together with each the substantial polygonal format of the main and base members secures stability of the main member against the base member, thereby enhancing product reliability and user satisfaction.

[Para 11]

Although the present invention is briefly summarized, the fuller understanding of the invention can be obtained by the following drawings, detailed description and appended claims.

[Para 12]

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THEDRAWINGS

These and other features, aspects and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[Para 13]

FIG. 1 is a perspective view illustrating a portable net device according to a first embodiment of the present invention;

[Para 14]

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along II-II in FIG. 1;

[Para 15]

Figs. 3 and 4 are side views of the portable net device;

[Para 16]

FIG. 5 is a construction view showing a supporting member in FIG. 1;

[Para 17]

FIG. 6 is a schematic view showing a coiling mechanism of the portable net device; and

[Para 18]

FIG. 7 is a view illustrating the portable net device according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

[Para 19]

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 shows a perspective view of a portable net device **10**. As shown therein, the net device **10** comprises a main member **12** forming a first closed loop 14. The main member **12** is defined by bottom and top sections **16, 18**. In order to match with the main member **12**, a base member **20** is

provided to form a second closed loop **22** in a substantially similar shape with the main member **12**.

[Para 20]

The base member **20** is defined by a front section **24** and a non-front section **26**. In this construction, the main member bottom section **16** is attached to the base member front section **24** so that the main member **12** can be angularly raised against the base member **20** while maintaining a partial attachment of the main and base members **12, 20**. FIG. 2 shows a cross-section taken along II-II in FIG. 1. As wherein therein, the main and base members **12, 20** are each fabric-covered so that the main member **12** is carried in a main sleeve **56**, and the base member **20** is carried in the base sleeve **58**.

[Para 21]

A fabric member **28** is provided to have a front section **30** and a non-front section **32** where the fabric member front section **30** is connected to the main member **12** to flexibly stop the flight of projectiles (not shown). The fabric member **28** is preferably formed of a net in a baggy format. To improve usability, the net device **10** further comprises a connecting member **34** to selectively attach the fabric member non-front section **32** to the base member non-front section **26** in a detachable attachment format. The fabric member **28** may form a net fabrication, where threads are interwoven or knotted together to form a plurality of meshes. The fabric member **28** may be formed of a material such as synthetic cloth or natural cloth.

[Para 22]

With reference to FIGS. 3 and 4, the connecting member **34** is provided to improve product applicability. For example, when the non-front section **32** of the fabric member **28** is attached to the non-front section **26** of the base member **20** the net device **10** can be used for soccer ball catching in soccer ball games or ball kicking practice. On the other hand, when the connecting member **34** is released from the rear end engagement, that is, when the non-front section 26 of the base member 20 is detached from its attachment to the non-front section **32** of the fabric member **28**, the fabric member **28** becomes draped toward the first closed loop 14 formed by the main member **12**, whereby the net device **10** serves to efficiently stop, for example, the flight of a baseball.

[Para 23]

Although the net **28** itself carries a reasonable elasticity in stopping the flight of a larger ball the fabric member **28** draped closer to the main member **12** functions much better in stopping the flight of a relatively smaller ball like a baseball. The closer draping of the fabric member **28** to the main member **12** further carries a substantial extent of ball retrieval characteristics.

[Para 24]

For a better performance, the connecting member **34** is preferably formed of a hook **50**. The hook **50** is detachably attached to the fabric member non-front section **32** and releasably hooked to the base member non-front section **26**. Alternately, the hook **50** is detachably attached to the base member non-front section **26** and releasably hooked to the fabric member non-front section **32**.

[Para 25]

In order to stabilize the upward posture of the main member **12**, the net device **10** also comprises a supporting member **36** to sustain the main member **12** against the base member **20** while maintaining a substantial angle between the main and base members **12, 20**. Here, the main and base members **12, 20** are rotably attached to each other around the respective bottom and front sections **16, 24** of the main and base member **12, 20**.

[Para 26]

As further shown in FIG. 5, the supporting member **36** is formed of a pair of rods **68** whose ends **64** become removably, correspondingly carried in the main and base holes **60, 62**. As shown therein, the rods **68** are each elastically detachable to two pieces which remain connected by an elastic string **70** provided in the respective rods **68**. This way, the supporting member **36** can be easily dissembled to the smaller pieces to facilitate storage.

[Para 27]

In a preferred version, the net device **10** also includes a main sleeve **56** substantially covering the main member **12**, and a base sleeve **58** substantially covering the base member **20**. The main sleeve **56** has main holes **60** and the base sleeve has base holes **62** such that the main and base holes **60, 62** removably carry therein ends **64** of the supporting member **36** to increase stability of the net device **10**.

[Para 28]

Together with the supporting member **36** there is provided a patch **44** to secure a desired angle between the main and base members **12, 20** while

enhancing stability of the raised-up posture of the main member **12** against the base member **20**. The patch **44** is attachedly sided to the main and base members **12, 20** around each bottom and front section **16, 24** of the main and base members **12, 20**. Preferably, the patch **44** has a guide **46** to support the supporting member **36** where the guide **46** is formed of a sleeve to allow passage of the supporting member **36** while providing an additional stability to the supporting member **36**. With the patch **44** provided in the portable net device **10**, the preferred angle by the main and base member **12, 20** is between about 40 degrees and slightly less than 90 degrees so that the main and base members **12, 20** can be maintained at a substantially erected but tilted position.

[Para 29]

In an embodiment, the main member **12** has a plurality of corners **38** each in arc so as to shape the first closed loop **14** in a substantial polygon, and the base member **20** has a plurality of corners **40** each in arc so as to shape the second closed loop in a substantial polygon. To realize each polygonal formation of the main and base members **12, 20** the portable net device **10** comprises a fabric retainer **42** formed adjacent to each of the corners **38, 40** so as to maintain the polygon in shape. The best mode of the polygonal formation is a substantial square format.

[Para 30]

FIG. 6 shows a storage mechanism applied to the portable net device **10**. As shown therein, for better storage and dissembling purposes, the main and base members **12, 20** are each formed in a coilable format so that the main and base members **12, 20** are each coilable to overlapping loops **48**. Preferably, the main and base members **12, 20** are each coiled in

twofold or threefold to the overlapping loops **48** to facilitate storage and portability. For assembly into the usable net device **10**, the overlapped loops **48** can be simply released for elastic pop-up setting to the polygonal formation. Then, the main member **12** is raised and supported by the supporting member **36** carried in the patch sleeve **46**.

[Para 31]

The main and base members **12**, **20** may be formed of an elastic material so as to facilitate the assembly and the coiled overlapping for disassembly. For disassembly of the net device **10**, the supporting member **36** can be simply removed, and the main and base members **10**, **20** are twisted and coiled into a plurality of overlapping loops 48. Accordingly, the pair of coiled members **12**, **20** can be easily stored in the storage bag (not shown).

[Para 32]

FIG. 7 shows the net device **10** with a target net portion **52**. As shown therein, the target net portion **52** is detachably attached across the first closed loop **14** to the main member **12**. The target net portion **52** has a central basket net **54** therethrough to allow passage of the flight of the projectiles.

[Para 33]

As discussed above, an advantage of the present invention is that the portable net device **10** employs an adjustable mechanism for attachment of the fabric member **28** to the base member **20** so as to expand usability to baseball catching, hockey ball catching and soccer ball catching. Further, the pair of coilable main and base members **12**, **20** are foldably connected to each other and coilably overlapped in multiple loops, respectively,

thereby further facilitating storage, assembly and disassembly of the net device **10**.

[Para 34]

In addition, the patch sleeve **46** receiving therethrough the supporting member **36** in combination with the substantial polygonal format of the main and base members **12, 20** secures stability of the main member **12** against the base member **20**, thereby enhancing product reliability and user satisfaction.

[Para 35]

Although the present invention has been described in considerable detail with reference to certain preferred versions thereof, other versions are possible by converting the aforementioned construction. Therefore, the scope of the invention shall not be limited by the specification specified above and the appended claims.